

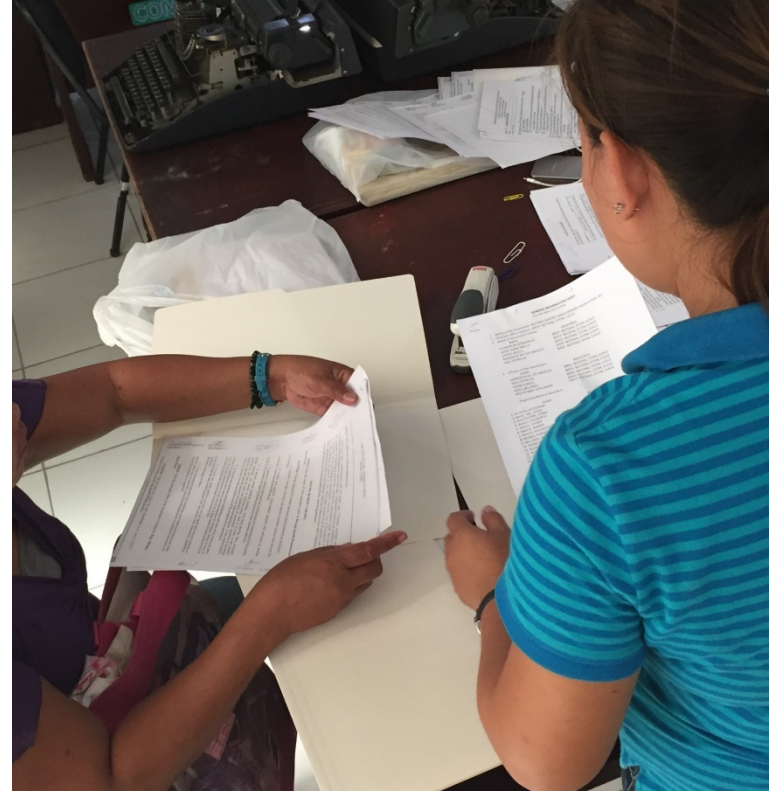
Divisive Literacies?

Bureaucracy and local volunteering in the Philippines

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The wider study

- Explores the adult learning dimension of participation in grassroots development programmes through volunteering
- 11 month ethnography (participant observation) with **two (2)** NGOs in the Philippines participated by 'vulnerable' youths and adults



In this seminar...

Whether and how
bureaucratic literacy
practices in both
organisations enhance
and/or constrain volunteers'
participation?

**Informal Settlers
Association**

The diagram consists of two large overlapping circles. The left circle is yellow and represents 'Volunteer Organisations'. The right circle is light green and represents 'Bureaucratic Institutions'. The intersection of the two circles is a lighter shade of yellow-green. Inside the yellow circle, there is a yellow rectangular box at the top containing the text 'Informal Settlers Association' and a light green rectangular box below it containing the text 'HIV/AIDS youth group'. Inside the light green circle, there is a yellow rectangular box at the top containing the text 'Government', followed by two light green rectangular boxes containing the text 'Government' and 'INGOs' respectively. At the bottom of the intersection area, the text 'LITERACY PRACTICES' is written in large, bold, black capital letters.

**HIV/AIDS youth
group**

Volunteer Organisations

Government

Government

INGOs

Bureaucratic Institutions

LITERACY PRACTICES

‘Taking hold’ of bureaucratic literacies while ‘on the job’

Pencil 15 pcs =
 Steadler pencil 7 pcs. ~~UNIT 43~~ Quantity 3
 Art stuff pastel = 77 ~~Box~~ ³ = 231
 Sketch pad 3 ~~5~~ ~~10~~ ~~15~~
 Staedler eraser ^{2 pcs} = 43.75 x 2 = 87.50
 Colleen colored pencil = 147
 box

Illustration 10 pcs. = 345.00
 Double sided tape = 30.
 Glue wrapper = 30

1500.00

Activity Proposal POSTER MAKING CONTEST

Materials	Quantity	Price	Total
Illustration / Poster Paper	1	30	30
Pencil	5	6	30
Brush	5	15	75
Erasers	2	5	10
Crayons	1 box (32 pcs)	55	55
Oil Pastel	1	110	110
Pentel Pen	2	32	64
Sharpener	2	5	10
Plastic Cover	1	15	15
Scotch Tape	2	10	20
Glue	1	17	17
Scissors	2	22	44
SNACKS	30	50	1500
		TOTAL	1980

PREPARED BY:

Peer Educator

Nurse

Chapter Program Manager

Luisa said that Tito should put “Line Items” and “Total Budget”. Luisa cut some of the items out, saying they were too expensive Tito took the list and a **Request for Purchase** with him.

Myra saw that he did not place any item for food, “**increase the budget** for food and then just buy cheap ones so we can buy for many. These are just estimates anyway!” He was also reminded that the main goal is to deliver the adolescent health lecture, so the art contest is a **background activity**.

–Field Notes, 09/01/2018

‘Taking hold’ of bureaucratic practices

- Not only regimenting language but also introduced to a certain way (ie. culture?) of working.
- Create a text that does not only make sense to him but should follow a form, language that can be ‘entered’ into a more formalised bureaucratic process.
- The process of creating such document exposed him to strategies to fulfilling bureaucratic requirements – ie. inflating numbers, putting deliverables to the front

ILOILO

Street,
Iloilo C
5000 Iloilo City
Philippines

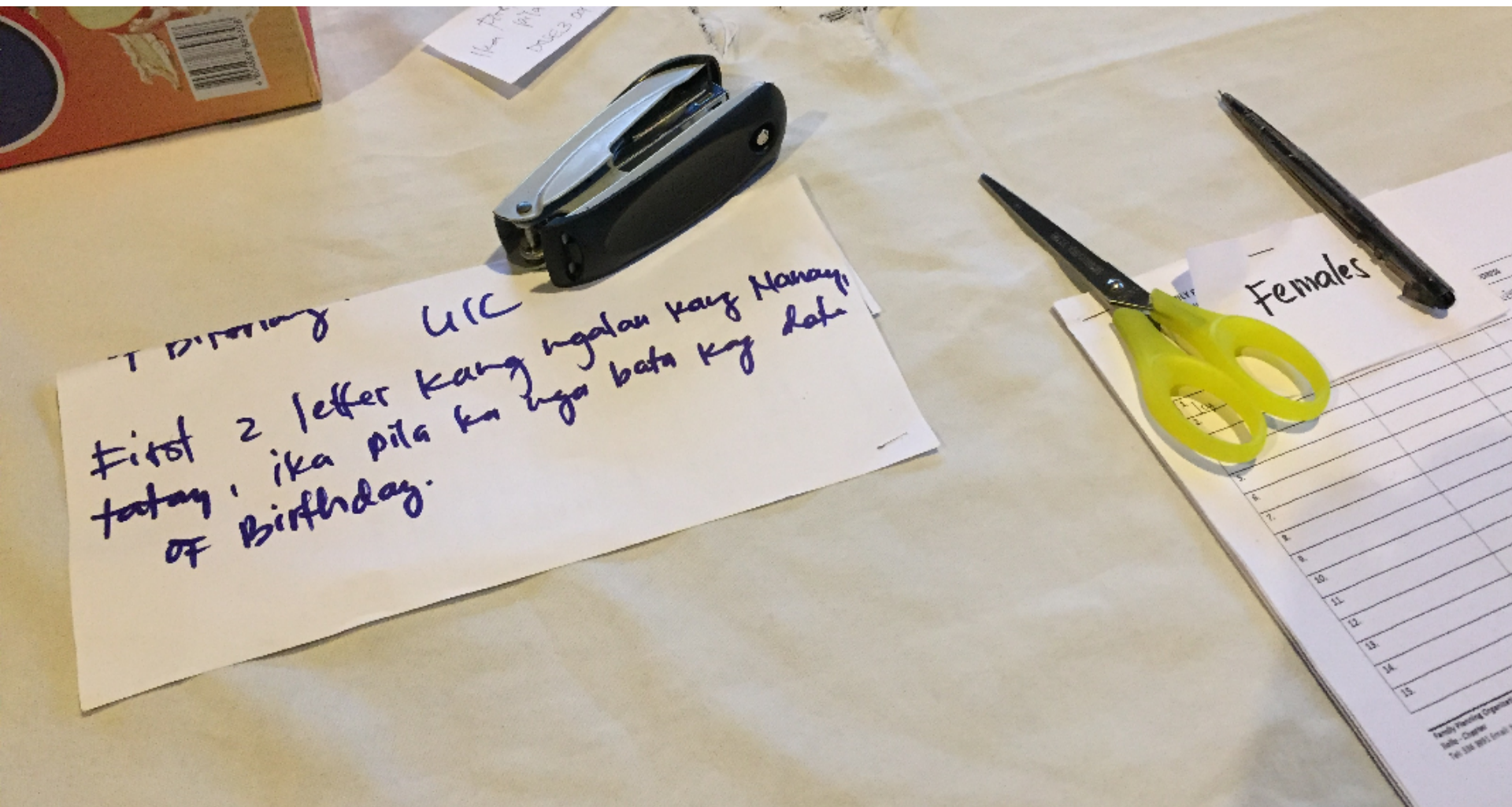
Tel. No. (033)

Email:

Website: www.org

NAME	UIC	AGE	ADDRESS	CONTACT #	SIGNATURE
1.					
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A Member Association of



‘Taking’ hold of bureaucratic practices

- Externally required documents are used by volunteers and staff in ways that adapt to the circumstances that the organisation finds itself at a particular time (i.e. need for additional funding)
- *Power of* but also *power over* bureaucratic texts.

Assembling documents of power

[REDACTED]

January 2, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Good Day!

The [REDACTED] like to appeal for a confirmation regarding your application in the association. Presently, the [REDACTED] is already finalizing its members for the upcoming designation of sublots. In addition, the association had already been registered under the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board and the official receipt had already been processed under the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR-6).

From this, we would like to request for your presence specifically your active participation every monthly meeting. It had already been approved by the association's board of members that inactivation of the membership for consecutive absences shall be subjected as forfeited.

Last November 26, 2017 during the monthly meeting, it had been discussed about the three-months advanced amortization fee which could be summed up to Php 2,625.00 for every 50 sq. meter- lot and Php 1,000.00 for the half payment of mobilizer fee. This will be only until January 15, 2018 and disobedience regarding the said payment will be considered as disqualification of account.

Also, another monthly meeting was being held last December 17, 2017 and it had been conversed, deliberated and finalized that there will be a payment of Php 480.00 for the land survey and the installation of mohons for every lot which will sum up to Php 120.00 (2 pieces are needed, Php 60.00 each). This had been agreed that the due dates of these payments will be on December 24, 2017.

Moreover, responsible payments shall always be paired with attendance and participation in every activity held by the association. And also, rules and regulations of the BSHAI were only been adopted from the bylaws of Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board.

Hence, we are hoping for your prompt response upon receiving this letter. As a memorandum, kindly meet the president, [REDACTED] personally for your queries and answers as soon as possible.

Thank you and God bless.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Secretary

[REDACTED] Association Inc.

Attested:

[REDACTED]
Vice President

[REDACTED] Association Inc.

Noted and approved:

[REDACTED] S
President

[REDACTED] Association

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Mila [treasurer]: I just want to say, if for example, we want to remove people, we write a resolution, sign this amongst us...

Susan [President]: That is no longer needed, Mila [sounding irritated], **we have minutes, we have a resolution...** we sent them a letter! That is in the minutes... **that's proof!** How many times do we need to write to them?!

– 18/02/2018

Assembling documents of power

- Volunteers themselves have created and disseminated documents of 'power'. Literacy as warning, threat, control and/or proof.
- These 'new' documents and processes mimicked the language and form of external bureaucratic documents which illustrates how external practices help structure internal ones (with literacy practices of volunteers playing a key role)
- (Over?)reliance on (formal) written rather than oral means in transferring information

‘Losing grip’ of Bureaucratic literacies: divisions and resistance


“We sent letters one-by-one”... the woman seems to have a **vague recollection** but the man said: “Yes, I signed mine”.

Susan reacted immediately, almost sounding combative, “You signed it! **Did you come here to talk to us and negotiate? No.**”

Mila sounded a bit more empathetic saying that the letter was a way for members to pay their dues faster. “That’s why we are pressuring you because we are also pressured... **We are just following the rules**”
– Field notes, 18/02/2018

**Over time,
original
members
'defaulted' and
by the time I left
fieldwork in
April 2018, half
of them were no
longer part of
the association**





In reality, no offence... but, I am really having a difficult time with the old members... the new ones I am not having a difficult time with because mostly, they can understand... the process, the situation. So no offence, who I see as always defaulting are those old members. So... I feel bad about you, but there is nothing I can do...

– Field Notes, 04/02/2018

The divisive tendency of literacy?

- Difficulty/failure to engage (i.e. 'losing grip') with bureaucratic literacies may contribute towards resistance and non-participation
- This highlights the tendency of literacy practices to contribute towards enhancing inequalities in a particular community



Constructing 'the squatter'

(a) Uplift the conditions of the underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban areas and in resettlement areas by making available to them decent housing at affordable cost, basic services, and employment opportunities;

(t) "Underprivileged and homeless citizens" refers to the beneficiaries of this Act and to individuals or families residing in urban and urbanizable areas whose income or combined household income falls within the poverty threshold as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority and who do not own housing facilities. This shall include those who live in makeshift dwelling units and do not enjoy security of tenure;

Frances: It's good that an association is mixed with people who are more knowledgeable... because if all of them have **squatter mentality**, they won't pay and they won't attain security of tenure.

Me: What do you mean by squatter mentality?

Frances: Squatter mentality – they think that everything is free, no financial obligation. They have been squatting free for 20, 50 years. I don't pay for land, no tax, no amortisation, no payment for electricity. So why do they have to pay now? This is a very affordable programme – they have money for gambling, money for alcohol and cigarettes but not for savings. **There is an attitude problem and not a financial problem.**

– Interview excerpt, 03/08/2018

I started writing ‘informal settlers’ on the project document and a woman came up to me and said: “**Do not call us squatters.** I’m tired of it. Call us homeowners!” – Field Notes



Speaking to the officer, Susan sounded like she was begging. She said that **they are very poor, and they will be evicted soon.** This is why they need the documents to be processed faster. – Field Notes

Identities and Participation

- framing ‘who volunteers are’ does not only reside in how policy documents and key government officials *speak* about these communities, but it influences the way these programmes are implemented.
- Volunteering can be a pathway for them to challenge and reject – but also strategically use/capitalise on – dominant identities attached to them by bureaucrats and by government documents.

What relevance to governments and NGOs?

- Diversify volunteer roles, but provide support. Who takes on the role of an 'educator'?
- Clarify values, communicate goals (again and again!) using 'chewable' language
- Reflect on the kinds/quality of relationships being developed and maintained
- Valorise knowledge and skills that volunteers bring to organisations but what about task- / organisational-specific knowledge?

Madamo nga salamat!

Thank you very much!

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